

**Pandemic Alert Period**  
**Surveillance and Testing of Avian Influenza A (H5N1) in Humans**

**Healthcare providers should inquire about recent travel history of patients presenting with influenza like illness (ILI). Patients with ILI and a history of travel within the previous 10 days to an affected area\* should be reported immediately to New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Communicable Disease Service (CDS) at 609-588-7500 during normal business hours and 609-392-2020 during nights, weekends, and holidays.**

**Reporting/Procedures**

All suspect cases of influenza meeting the above criteria ***must be reported to NJDHSS within one working day***. NJDHSS will follow up on each case. In addition to demographic and clinical information, travel itinerary, food history and information regarding contact with animals should be obtained. If possible, a rapid antigen test for influenza should also be performed.

**Deciding who to test for H5N1**

Testing for avian influenza A (H5N1) is indicated for **hospitalized** patients with:

- Radiographically confirmed pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), or other severe respiratory illness for which an alternative diagnosis has **not** been established; **and**
- History of travel within 10 days of symptom onset to a country with documented avian influenza A (H5N1) infections in poultry and/or humans.

**OR**

Testing for avian influenza A (H5N1) should be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with state and local health departments for **hospitalized or ambulatory** patients with:

- Documented temperature of >100.4°F (>38°C); **and**
- One or more of the following: cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath; **and**
- History of contact with poultry (e.g., visited a poultry farm, a household raising poultry, or a bird market) or a known or suspected human case of influenza A (H5N1) in an H5N1-affected country within 10 days prior to onset of symptoms.

*Testing can be arranged through NJDHSS CDS by contacting the above numbers.*

**Specimens**

The following specimens are appropriate for testing and should be collected within 24 hours of symptom onset and **before** administration of antiviral medications. It is acceptable and recommended that more than one swab or aspirate be collected.

- Nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate
- Oropharyngeal swab
- Brochoalveolar lavage specimen (BAL)
- Serum (Note: Acute samples should be drawn within 7 days of symptom onset on all suspect AI cases. CDC will perform confirmatory testing on sera, depending on results of other testing. These sera samples should be held at the facility until AI diagnosis is ruled out.)

PHEL lab submission forms can be obtained at the following website

<http://nj.gov/health/forms/srd-1.pdf>. Information regarding specimen collection, packaging and transport can be obtained by contacting NJDHSS CDS at the above numbers.

\*For a regularly updated listing of H5N1-affected countries, see the World Organization for Animal Health [OIE] website at [http://www.oie.int/eng/en\\_index.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/en_index.htm) and the WHO website at <http://www.who.int/en/>.